INVESTIGATION OF THE ASSASSINATION OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASSASSINATIONS

OF THE

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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nonviolent aspect wouldn't work and it would just lead to them being taken downtown and beaten by the police. So I would characterize it as rhetoric of violence but nothing specific as to take this stick and break a window.

Mr. EDGAR. But did that rhetoric lead to some of the younger members of the crowd picking up the sticks and using them, in your opinion?

Mr. MCCOLLOUGH. You are asking for my opinion now, and in my opinion, I am certain that the atmosphere, the rhetoric that was being talked at that time, the rumors that were going around about the young girl being beaten, all added to the tension and all added as I said to the spontaneous eruption downtown that day.

Mr. EDGAR. There were reports earlier in the narration that the sticks were purchased specifically to be used for acts of violence. In the early narration prior to your coming into the room there were some reports allegedly that the information was given to the Memphis police and FBI that sticks were being purchased and they were being possibly put together for acts of violence ahead of time. Wasn't it usual to have sticks of this type for mass demonstrations for the use of putting the placards on the sticks?

Mr. MCCOLLOUGH. I don't know where that report came from. It did not come from me, but I can explain to you here that earlier when the marchers had the placards, they would drape them around their necks as this man has done here. There was no semblance of order about them, and it was my conclusion that the sticks were brought in, not for violence, but in order to put some semblance of order to the marchers' uniformity, if you will, with the placards.

Mr. EDGAR. So you would not agree with the earlier informants that might have indicated to the Memphis police or to the FBI that the sticks were purchased specifically by either the Invaders or someone to create violence in the march?

Mr. MCCOLLOUGH. Only if he had better information than I had, and I had no information such as that.

Mr. EDGAR. I think you can return to the table at this point. Mr. McCollough, do you know if the Invaders were responsible in any way for the strike being held at all?

Mr. MCCOLLOUGH. No, sir; they were not responsible for the strike at all.

Mr. EDGAR. At any time through the period of the assassination did you have any relationship with the FBI?

Mr. MCCOLLOUGH. No, sir. As I testified earlier, I was solely responsible to the Memphis Police Department. I worked solely for them.

Mr. EDGAR. Were you aware of FBI agents who were related to the Memphis Police Department?

Mr. MCCOLLOUGH. At what point in time are you referring to, sir?

Mr. EDGAR. Prior to the assassination.

Mr. MCCOLLOUGH. No, I have no recollection of FBI participation with the police department.

Mr. EDGAR. Did you have any relationship with the Central Intelligence Agency during this period of time?

Mr. McCollough. No, sir; I had no relationship with the Central Intelligence Agency.

Mr. Edgar. Did you have any relationship with any other intelligence agency?

Mr. McCollough. No, sir. Again, I will testify that I was solely responsible to the police department as a commissioned officer there.

Mr. Edgar. Prior to the assassination, at any time were you employed by any of these groups?

Mr. McCollough. No, sir; I was not.

Mr. Edgar. You were aware, were you not, that your reports were routinely passed on to the FBI?

Mr. McCollough. At what time was I aware now? You are saying I was aware?

Mr. Edgar. Were you aware?

Mr. McCollough. At the time, if you are dealing with the time of the assassination, I was not aware that my reports were going to the FBI.

Mr. Edgar. Did you ever propose that the Invader group take any specific action?

Mr. McCollough. No, sir. Again, I was working under specific instructions not to commit any acts of violence, not to provoke any acts of violence, merely to report upon the activities that occurred as they occurred.

Mr. Edgar. Let me take you back to the Lorraine Hotel for a moment. You had indicated that Reverend Orange had asked you to take him shopping?

Mr. McCollough. Yes, sir.

Mr. Edgar. What did you understand your role as the person to provide transportation on the night of the assassination? Where did you think you were going to be transporting people?

Mr. McCollough. I was headed down to the Lorraine Motel because the Invaders had a room at the motel, but I had stopped by the Clayborn Temple and Reverend Orange had asked me to take him shopping and I obliged him just out of courtesy to him.

Mr. Edgar. So your purpose in being in the courtyard below was not to in fact transport Dr. King but in fact was to visit the Invaders' room that was at the Lorraine Hotel?

Mr. McCollough. Yes, sir.

Mr. Edgar. What was the purpose of the Invaders having a room at the Lorraine Hotel?

Mr. McCollough. As you know, earlier they had the meeting with Dr. King and his group, and so was the SCLC staying at the motel, it was just out of mere logistics that they would have a room there in the Lorraine Motel.

Mr. Edgar. I am not sure I understand why that would be necessary. If an organization wanted to meet with SCLC or with Dr. King, they could come to his room or they could meet in the lobby or they could visit some other place?

Mr. McCollough. Well, the room was provided. It was provided free, I don't know by whom specifically, but it was almost like a fringe benefit of the movement. If you go back to what I said earlier about the cars, about the money, it was a freebie and it was taken.